

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

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R 201442Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1138

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV IS JO

SUBJECT: ISRAELI EDITORIAL REACTION TO GUSH EMUNIM MARCH TO JERICHO

REF: JERUSALEM 538

1. BEGIN UNCLAS. EDITORIALS APRIL 20 IN DAVAR (LABOR) AND HATZOFI (NRP) PRESENT CONFLICTING ASSESSMENTS OF GUSH EMUNIM MARCH TO JERICHO OVER PAST TWO DAYS AND PRESAGE THE CABINET DEBATE STILL TO BE HELD OVER WEST BANK SETTLEMENT POLICY.

2. DAVAR POINTS OUT THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE NO DIRECT CLASHES BETWEEN MARCHERS AND THE ARAB POPULATION, THE MARCH DID FOMENT DISTURBANCES AT OTHER PLACES THAN ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE MARCH AND HARMED ISRAEL'S IMAGE IN THE WORLD. THE MARCH ALSO DEMONSTRATED THE STRENGTH OF GUSH EMUNIM IN CONDUCTING "ONE-TIME SHOWS" IN SUPPORT OF WEST BANK SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN SPITE OF ITS REFUSAL TO HELP WITH THE MANPOWER PROBLEMS AT SETTLEMENTS AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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3. DAVAR GOES ON TO SAY THAT, WHEREAS THE GOVERNMENT CHOSE TO

AVOID A CONFRONTATION WITH GUSH EMUNIM OVER THE MARCH, SUCH A CONFRONTATION OVER QADOUM--AS WELL AS OTHER POSSIBLE UNLAWFUL SETTLEMENTS IN THE FUTURE--CANNOT BE AVOIDED. IF THE GOVERNMENT DECIDES THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SETTLEMENT IN SAMARIA, "AS IT APPARENTLY WILL," THE QADOUM SETTLERS WILL HAVE TO GO ELSEWHERE IN THE TERRITORIES TO SITES SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. DAVAR CONCLUDES THAT THE THREAT OF HAMMER AND OTHER NRP MINISTERS MUST NOT DETER THE CABINET MAJORITY, EVEN IF IT MEANS A REALIGNMENT OF THE COALITION.

4. HATZOFI SAYS THAT THE LARGE TURNOUT FOR THE MARCH "TESTIFIES TO THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF IN THE COMMANDMENT TO SETTLE THE LAND," A TREND WHICH IT SAYS HAS GAINED STRENGTH AFTER THE WEST BANK ELECTIONS "WHICH GAVE THE PLO AND THE COMMUNISTS AN ABSOLUTE VICTORY." THE EDITORIAL CALLS IT "INCONCEIVABLE" THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD RETREAT FROM ITS POLICY AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF "A COMMUNIST-PLO STATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN." THOSE WHO CALL FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK, "FROM THE DIFFERENT SHADES OF COMMUNISTS THROUGH MAPAM TO ALL KINDS OF CAPITULATORS," DISREGARD THE THREAT WHICH "SOVIET-PLO POWER IN THE HEARTLAND OF THE COUNTRY" WOULD POSE TO ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE.

5. LIKE DAVAR, HATZOFI ALSO DISCUSSES QADOUM AND THE UPCOMING CABINET DEBATE, EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE MAJORITY OF MINISTERS WILL REJECT THE PRESSURE FROM "LEFTISTS" FOR THE EVACUATION OF QADOUM. "THE TENS OF THOUSANDS WHO TOOK PART IN THE MARCH SHOW THAT THERE IS SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR QADOUM IN ALL RANKS OF THE PEOPLE."

6. OTHER PAPERS REPORT THAT NO INCIDENTS OCCURRED DURING THE MARCH ITSELF AND ATTRIBUTE THIS TO THE PRECAUTIONS TAKEN BY THE IDF. THEY ALSO REPORT CLASHES BETWEEN IDF AND COUNTER-DEMONSTRATORS IN SEVERAL WEST BANK TOWNS WHICH LEFT ONE ARAB DEAD (JERUSALEM SEPTEL). END UNCLASSIFIED

7. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: COMMENT: THE MARCH TO JERICHO-- WITH THE IDF SEEMINGLY WELL-PREPARED TO GUARD THOUSANDS OF ORTHODOX JEWISH ACTIVISTS WHO OPPOSE STATED GOVERNMENT POLICY ON THE WEST BANK BUT UNABLE TO COPE WITH ARAB DEMONSTRATORS WITHOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YET ANOTHER DEATH--HAS SERVED ONLY TO HIGHLIGHT ONCE AGAIN BOTH THE NEED FOR AN ISRAELI POLICY TOWARD THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE DIFFICULTY OF FORMULATING ONE WITHOUT PROVOKING A DOMESTIC CRISIS. THE "SUCCESS" OF THE MARCH WILL, IF ANYTHING, MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO COME TO GRIPS WITH QADOUM AND ALL IT SYMBOLIZES. GUSH EMUNIM REMAINS THE clearest voice IN THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, WITH ITS CALL FOR JEWISH SETTLEMENT THROUGHOUT GREATER ISRAEL.

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